SACRED SONGS AGAINST SILENCE

50 Hymns of Conscience from the World's Faiths

Moral and Ethical Teachings That Challenge the Trump, Project 2025, and MAGA Agenda

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Preface

Throughout human history, music has served as a moral compass — breaking down divisions, drawing circles wider, and tearing down walls of hate and prejudice. Every major faith tradition has produced hymns, chants, prayers, and songs that articulate the deepest ethical commitments of humanity: caring for the stranger, feeding the hungry, welcoming the outcast, protecting the vulnerable, and pursuing justice.[1]

This book presents 50 sacred and spiritually rooted songs from Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, the Bahá'í Faith, and the broader human rights tradition. Each entry is paired with specific actions of the Trump administration, Project 2025, and the MAGA movement that stand in direct moral contradiction to the song's message. Project 2025 is a radical blueprint to take over the federal government, centralize executive power, and enact a far-right agenda that strips Americans of their rights. From mass deportations to gutting healthcare, from defunding schools to dismantling environmental protections, these policies harm the very people that the world's sacred music calls us to protect.[2][3]

The songs are organized by category of harm, moving from the treatment of immigrants and strangers through healthcare, education, the environment, workers' rights, veterans, equality, and finally to the call for courage and

perseverance. Short comparisons highlight how each song's message directly challenges specific Trump/MAGA policies.

Part I: Welcoming the Stranger — Immigration and Refugees

The Bible teaches: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:35-40). The Quran instructs believers to "be kind to parents, relatives, orphans and the needy" (2:83). Project 2025 calls for mass deportations, raids across the country, ending birthright citizenship, separating families, and dismantling the asylum system. Tom Homan, the administration's "Border Czar," was a contributor to Project 2025.[4][5][6][7]

Song 1: "For Everyone Born" — Shirley Erena Murray (Christian, 1998)

Tradition: Christian (ecumenical)
Key Lyric: "For everyone born, a place at the table, for everyone born, clean water and bread, a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing"[8]

Shirley Erena Murray wrote this hymn while working with Amnesty International because she "couldn't find anything to reflect a broad overview of human rights in any hymnbook". The hymn draws directly from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — the right to shelter, safety, food, a job, freedom of speech, and worship — placed in a Gospel context.[9][10]

The Contrast: Project 2025 proposes carrying out large-scale raids to round up and detain millions of immigrants, forcing people into detention camps and deporting them en masse. Murray's hymn insists on "a place at the table" for everyone — the policy demands removal from the table entirely.[4]

Song 2: "All Are Welcome" — Marty Haugen (Christian, 1994)

Tradition: Catholic/ecumenical
Key Lyric: "Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live... Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face"[11]

This beloved entrance hymn envisions a house built of "hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace" where "the love of Christ shall end divisions". Its final verse explicitly calls to "bring an end to fear and danger" and names the outcast and the stranger as bearing the image of God.[11]

The Contrast: The Trump administration's immigration enforcement targets immigrant communities through mass deportations and raids, separating families and dismantling the asylum system. The hymn builds a house of welcome; the policy builds walls of exclusion.[5]

Song 3: "The Immigrant's Song" — Contemporary Christian

Tradition: Christian
Key Lyric: "The Bible says to the stranger be kind, that in love and faith we can be blind. God drew no line in the sand between lands"[12]

This contemporary song reminds believers that immigrants "ask not for gold or fortunes told... They need food, water, roof, and bed, salvation, a safe place to lay their head." It confronts fear directly: "The Bible does say to stop living in fear, to love all your neighbors".[12]

The Contrast: Historical data shows the first Trump administration reduced green cards to new applicants by 418,453 and reduced non-immigrant visas by at least 11,178,668 — a 63% reduction of legal immigration. The song says "find them a way"; the policy slams the door.[2]

Song 4: "Down the Road Run Refugees" — Methodist Hymn

Tradition: Methodist/Christian
Key Lyric: Asks why refugees must suffer "while the ones who claim to care continue endless talking?"[13]

This hymn connects directly to Jesus' parable of the sheep and goats: "I was a stranger and you did not invite me in... I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me" (Matthew 25:41-43).[13]

The Contrast: Project 2025 seeks to dismantle the asylum system entirely, turning away refugees fleeing violence and persecution — the very people Jesus identified himself with.[5]

Song 5: "Mercy to Mankind" — Native Deen (Islamic Nasheed)

Tradition: Islamic
Key Lyric: "He was a mercy, a mercy to all of mankind... So many stories, his justice and mercy"[14]

This nasheed celebrates the Prophet Muhammad's radical compassion — forgiving those who harmed him, protecting women and children, and declaring even enemies free at the conquest of Mecca. "The women and the children and every innocent should be protected no matter how oppressed we get".[14]

The Contrast: Family separation policies and mass detention of immigrant families, including children, violate the Islamic principle that "every innocent should be protected." The Quran repeatedly commands care for the stranger, the orphan, and the wayfarer.[7][15]

Song 6: "Oseh Shalom" — Jewish Prayer for Peace

Tradition: Jewish
Key Lyric: "May the One who creates peace in the heavens bring peace to us and to all Israel"[16][17]

Set to a beloved melody by Israeli composer Nurit Hirsch, this prayer from the Kaddish has become a universal Jewish anthem for peace. It is sung in synagogues, at Jewish camps, and at moments of communal grief and hope.[17]

The Contrast: Mass deportation raids that tear families apart and create fear in immigrant communities are the antithesis of peace. The prayer asks God to bring shalom — wholeness, peace, completeness — while the policy brings rupture, fear, and scattering.

Song 7: "Namo Avalokiteshvara" — Buddhist Chant of Compassion

Tradition: Buddhist (Mahayana/Zen)
Key Lyric: A chant invoking the Bodhisattva of Great

Compassion, Avalokiteshvara — "a great being who has developed human qualities to a very high degree"[18]

In Plum Village practice centers worldwide, this chant is offered daily to "generate compassion for all living beings" and send "peaceful energy through the sound of the bell" so that "all suffering in them cease".[19]

The Contrast: Policies that criminalize asylum seekers, detain families in camps, and deport people to dangerous conditions represent the opposite of the Buddhist commitment to end suffering for all beings.

Part II: Feeding the Hungry and Caring for the Poor

Project 2025 guts SNAP and WIC food assistance while rejecting efforts to offer free universal school meals. The Congressional Budget Office estimates more than 3 million people could lose SNAP benefits under the new work requirements. The Quran commands: "Give food to the poor, the orphan, and the captive, saying, 'We feed you for the sake of God alone'".[15][20][4]

Song 8: "Here I Am, Lord" — Dan Schutte (Christian, 1981)

Tradition: Catholic/Christian
Key Lyric: "I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame. I will set a feast for them... Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied"[21]

Based on Isaiah 6:8, this hymn is God's direct call to care for the suffering. The response — "Here I am, Lord... I will hold your people in my heart" — represents the moral obligation to answer when the vulnerable cry out.[22]

The Contrast: Slashing SNAP benefits that feed millions, eliminating Head Start for over 1 million children in low-income families, and rejecting universal child care — these are the opposite of setting "a feast" and providing "finest bread."[4]

Song 9: "What Does the Lord Require?" — Based on Micah 6:8

Tradition: Christian/Jewish
Key Lyric: "What does the Lord require, but to do what is right, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God"[1]

This text from the Hebrew prophet Micah has been set to music many times and remains one of the most powerful distillations of ethical obligation in all of scripture. The Choristers Guild calls it "a spirited expression of justice".[1]

The Contrast: Gutting Medicaid by turning it into an underfunded block grant, crippling public education, and slashing food assistance is the opposite of doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly.[4]

Song 10: "God Has Work for Us to Do" — Mark Miller (Christian)

Tradition: Christian
Key Lyric: From the songbook *Roll Down, Justice!* — songs that "transform and inspire your community" and "empower" people to be "instruments of peace"[1]

Mark Miller writes: "Too often the sacred worth of people is compromised and crushed by powerful systems sustained by those with power and wealth. Too often fear and violence are made the tools for salvation".[1]

The Contrast: Project 2025 dismantles services for underserved communities and emboldens discrimination in everything from housing to education to employment. The sacred worth of people is indeed being crushed by powerful systems.[4]

Song 11: Islamic Teaching on Feeding the Poor — Quranic Mandate

Tradition: Islamic
Key Teaching: "Anyone who looks after and works for a widow and a poor person is like a warrior fighting for Allah's cause" (Bukhari)[23]

The Prophet Muhammad commanded: "Call the orphan to you. Pat him tenderly on the head. Then feed him from your food. This will soften your heart". The Quran states that true righteousness includes giving "charity out of their cherished wealth to relatives, orphans" and the needy (2:177).[7][15]

The Contrast: Eliminating Head Start, gutting SNAP and WIC, and rejecting free school meals directly contradicts the Islamic imperative to feed the hungry and care for orphans.[4]

Song 12: "God Is One; Man Is One" — Bahá'í Song

Tradition: Bahá'í
Key Lyric: "God is One; man is One; and all the religions agree. When everyone learns the three onenesses, we'll have world unity"[24]

This Bahá'í children's song teaches that "God is love. God is light. And all are as one in His sight. Black and white, red and yellow, this is the time to unite".[24]

The Contrast: Policies that disproportionately harm communities of color, low-income families, and immigrants reject the fundamental Bahá'í teaching that all people are one family deserving of equal care and dignity.

Part III: Healing the Sick — Healthcare

Project 2025 proposes gutting Medicaid through draconian time limits or lifetime caps and turning it into an underfunded block grant. An estimated 11.8 million Americans could lose medical coverage over the next decade. At the VA, sweeping cuts, mass firings, and arbitrary staffing caps are increasing wait times for life-saving mental health care.[20][25][4]

Song 13: "Amazing Grace" — John Newton (1773)

Tradition: Christian (universal)
Key Lyric: "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me"

Written by a former slave trader turned abolitionist clergyman, this hymn has become "an anthem against all forms of social injustice". Martin Luther King sang it on civil rights marches; President Obama sang it at the Charleston funeral after a white supremacist killed nine Black churchgoers. It is performed an estimated 10 million times a year worldwide.[26][27]

The Contrast: Grace implies mercy given to those who don't "deserve" it. Stripping healthcare from 11.8 million people through Medicaid work requirements is the opposite of grace — it is condemnation of the sick and the poor.[20]

Song 14: "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" — Thomas A. Dorsey (1932)

Tradition: African American Gospel
Key Lyric: "Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand. I am tired, I am weak, I am worn."

Written after the death of Dorsey's wife and newborn son, this hymn was Martin Luther King Jr.'s favorite song. It captures the exhaustion and vulnerability of those in crisis — exactly the people healthcare is meant to serve.[28]

The Contrast: The Trump administration's VA has seen historic staffing losses, increasing wait times for life-saving mental health care, and veterans' care being put at risk. 400,000 VA employees have been stripped of collective bargaining rights.[25]

Song 15: "Om Mani Padme Hum" — Buddhist Compassion Mantra

Tradition: Buddhist
Key Lyric: "Hail to the jewel in the lotus" — the mantra of the Compassion of Buddha[29]

This is "arguably the most famous chant in the whole world." It is "said to calm fears, soothe concerns, and even mend broken hearts." Buddhist monks chant it for hours, and "the more you do it, the better off you are, and the better off the world is".[29]

The Contrast: Cutting healthcare for millions, politicizing the FDA, and endangering critical health research through NIH funding restrictions create the very fears and suffering this mantra seeks to heal.[4]

Song 16: "There Is a Longing in Our Hearts" — Anne Quigley (Christian)

Tradition: Christian
Key Lyric: Boldly asks God "for justice, for freedom, for mercy"[30]

This hymn from the Presbyterian hymnal *Glory to God* works as a musical prayer of intercession for those who long for relief from suffering.

The Contrast: The administration threatens consumer safety by curtailing protections and politicizing the FDA, FAA, and TSA — the very agencies responsible for keeping people safe and healthy.[4]

Part IV: Protecting Children and Education

Project 2025 completely eliminates the Department of Education, slashes public school funding, and redirects taxpayer dollars to religious private schools. It eliminates Head Start for over 1 million children. Removing Title I funding would worsen teacher shortages by eliminating up to 6% of the workforce in low-income communities.[31][4]

Song 17: "This Little Light of Mine" — African American Spiritual

Tradition: African American Spiritual/Civil Rights
Key Lyric: "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine... Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine"

Born as a children's song, "This Little Light of Mine" was transformed by the civil rights movement into "an anthem of singular power". Freedom Singer Rutha Mae Harris explains: "Music was an anchor. It kept us from being afraid". The song

has been used from the 1960s to Charlottesville to push back against injustice.[32]

The Contrast: Defunding public education, eliminating Head Start, and selectively erasing nonwhite perspectives from curricula extinguish the very lights this song calls us to let shine — especially in children.[2]

Song 18: "Jesus Loves the Little Children"

Tradition: Christian
Key Lyric: "Red, brown, yellow, black, and white, they are precious in His sight"

This universally known children's hymn teaches that all children, regardless of race or background, are precious and loved equally.

The Contrast: Project 2025's education plans would "turn education into a privilege reserved for wealthier communities, abandoning millions of students in under-resourced areas and widening the wealth gap".[2]

Song 19: "Equity and Justice" — Bahá'í Children's Song

Tradition: Bahá'í
Key Lyric: "The kingdom of God is founded upon equity and justice... upon mercy, compassion and kindness to every living soul"[33]

This teaching from the Bahá'í writings emphasizes that equity means being "fair and strive to provide for the comfort of all". The moral themes focus on "kindness, truthfulness, generosity, love, and patience" found in all religious traditions.[33]

The Contrast: A child's access to quality schooling depending "entirely on their zip code" is the antithesis of equity and justice for every living soul.[2]

Song 20: Quranic Teaching on Orphans — "I and the Orphan Sponsor in Paradise"

Tradition: Islamic
Key Teaching: The Prophet Muhammad said: "I and the one who looks after an orphan shall be in Paradise like these two" — holding up two fingers barely apart (Bukhari 5304)[7]

The Quran commands in multiple verses the care and protection of orphans: "Allah instructs you to treat orphans fairly". Sponsoring an orphan is described as a "loan to God" — the very definition of godliness.[15][7]

The Contrast: Eliminating Head Start for 1 million children in low-income families, many of whom come from single-parent or orphaned households, is directly contrary to Islam's most emphasized social obligation.[4]

Part V: Protecting God's Creation — The Environment

The Trump administration has carried out what EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin called "the largest rollback of environmental protections in U.S. history". Executive orders boost the coal industry, limit states' ability to address climate change, and withdraw from the Paris Agreement. Renewable energy has been targeted through rolled-back tax credits and cancelled offshore wind permits.[34][35][36][37]

Song 21: "God of Grace and God of Glory" — Harry Emerson Fosdick (1930)

Tradition: Baptist/ecumenical
Key Lyric: "Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore... Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour"[38]

Written during the Great Depression by the champion of the Social Gospel movement, this hymn is "nothing less than a call to conscience". Fosdick listed human shortcomings: "warring madness," "pride," selfishness that leaves us "rich in things and poor in soul". Under his leadership, Riverside Church was interdenominational, interracial, and centered on urban social ministry.[39][38]

The Contrast: "Trump's moves to limit state climate action and increase coal production are a bailout to the fossil fuel industry and a death sentence for thousands in the U.S.". Coal-fired power plants emit at least 20 times more greenhouse gas emissions than wind and solar. This hymn's plea against "weak resignation to the evils we deplore" could not be more urgent.[34]

Song 22: "All Creatures of Our God and King" — St. Francis of Assisi (1225)

Tradition: Christian (Catholic)
Key Lyric: "All creatures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us sing... Thou burning sun with golden beam, thou silver moon with softer gleam"

St. Francis's canticle celebrates the sacredness of all creation — sun, moon, wind, water, fire, earth — as manifestations of divine love.

The Contrast: The administration is "finalizing a reduction of the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act, eliminating many wetlands and streams from protection". Rolling back environmental protections while Francis praised God through Brother Wind and Sister Water.[35]

Song 23: "Mool Mantar" — Sikh Foundation Prayer

Tradition: Sikh
Key Teaching: "There is one God whose name is truth, is the creator. Has no fear, has no hate"[40]

The Mool Mantar's message "transcends societal constructs, emphasizing the inherent dignity and worth of every individual." It fosters "a sense of harmony with the universe and a profound respect for all life forms" and "promotes environmental stewardship".[40]

The Contrast: Slashing federal jobs at the EPA and Department of Interior — over 2,000 positions cut — and systematically dismantling research and data collection on environmental contamination violates the Sikh principle of harmony with creation.[36]

Song 24: "For the Beauty of the Earth" — Folliott S. Pierpoint (1864)

Tradition: Christian (Anglican)
Key Lyric: "For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies, for the love which from our birth over and around us lies"

This hymn of thanksgiving for creation — earth, skies, flowers, trees, and human community — calls believers to gratitude and stewardship.

The Contrast: 2024 was Earth's hottest year on record, and climate scientists say rising heat contributes to extreme weather affecting millions. Yet the administration withdrew from the Paris Agreement and removed incentives for clean energy. These orders "will make our air dirtier, make people sicker, make energy more expensive, and make our communities less prepared for extreme weather".[37]

Song 25: Buddhist Teaching on Interdependence — "The Great Compassion Mantra"

Tradition: Buddhist
Key Teaching: The Great Compassion Dharani is chanted to invoke compassion for all living beings[41][19]

The merits of chanting "will benefit not only yourself, but all living creatures, including small animals and insects, so that their souls will become tranquil and joyful". This reflects the Buddhist understanding that all life is interconnected.[42]

The Contrast: Environmental rollbacks that threaten wetlands, streams, clean air, and wildlife habitat reject the Buddhist teaching that all living creatures are interconnected and deserving of compassion.[35]

Part VI: Workers' Rights and Economic Justice

Project 2025 allows employers to stop paying overtime and rolls back overtime pay protections. It makes it harder for

workers to organize and form unions, and eviscerates child labor standards. At the EPA alone, 400,000 employees were stripped of collective bargaining rights.[25][4]

Song 26: "We Shall Overcome" — Civil Rights Anthem

Tradition: Christian/Gospel/Civil Rights
Key Lyric: "We shall overcome, we shall overcome, we shall overcome someday. Deep in my heart, I do believe, we shall overcome someday"

This song originated as a gospel hymn by the Reverend Charles Albert Tindley, the son of a slave. During a 1945 labor strike, worker Lucille Simmons changed the singular "I'll overcome" to the plural "We will overcome" and added verses like "We'll get higher wages" and "We will win our rights". Joan Baez led 300,000 people singing it at the 1963 March on Washington. President Johnson quoted it before Congress in 1965.[43][44]

The Contrast: Gutting workers' rights to organize, ending overtime pay, and eviscerating child labor protections are exactly the injustices this anthem was born to resist.[4]

Song 27: "Lift Every Voice and Sing" — James Weldon Johnson (1900)

Tradition: African American/Christian
Key Lyric: "Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring, ring with the harmonies of liberty"

Known as the "Black National Anthem," this hymn celebrates the struggle for freedom and justice while acknowledging the "dark past".[28]

The Contrast: Defunding services for underserved communities and emboldening racial discrimination in housing, education, and employment silences the very voices this anthem calls to sing.[4]

Song 28: "Get Up, Stand Up" — Bob Marley & Peter Tosh (1973)

Tradition: Rastafarian/Reggae
Key Lyric: "Get up, stand up, stand up for your rights"

Written after Marley witnessed extreme poverty in Haiti, this song argues that "instead of waiting for gold and happiness in heaven, the poor should demand better treatment while alive on Earth".[45]

The Contrast: Ending overtime pay, gutting worker protections, and weakening unions while cutting Medicaid and SNAP ensure that the poor remain poor — the very condition Marley protested.[20][4]

Song 29: "L'takein (The Na Na Song)" — Dan Nichols (Jewish, 1996)

Tradition: Jewish (Reform)
Key Lyric: "Blessed are You God, Ruler of the world, who has given us the opportunity to repair the world"[46]

This song frames *tikkun olam* — repairing the world — as a blessing and an opportunity, inspiring Jewish youth to see social justice as sacred work.[46]

The Contrast: Project 2025 breaks what *tikkun olam* seeks to repair — dismantling systems of care, stripping protections

from the vulnerable, and concentrating power in the hands of the few.[2]

Part VII: Veterans and National Service

Project 2025 proposes cutting benefits for disabled veterans, reducing the number of medical conditions veterans can claim for disability. It aims to automate claims to increase denial rates, cut homeless veterans' programs, and close VA clinics. A Senate report documents historic staffing losses at the VA causing increasing wait times for mental health care.[47][25]

Song 30: "Battle Hymn of the Republic" — Julia Ward Howe (1861)

Tradition: Christian/American
Key Lyric: "As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free"

Written during the Civil War as a hymn of liberation, the Battle Hymn connects the sacrifice of soldiers to the moral cause of freedom.

The Contrast: Project 2025 would slash federal jobs held by veterans, drastically limit disability benefits, and ban transgender troops from serving. The Senate report reveals "sweeping cuts, mass firings, arbitrary staffing caps, and draconian workforce policies" at the VA.[25][4]

Song 31: "Eternal Father, Strong to Save" — William Whiting (1860)

Tradition: Christian (Navy Hymn)
Key Lyric: "O hear us when we cry to Thee, for those in peril on the sea"

The official hymn of the U.S. Navy, sung at the funerals of presidents and military heroes, this prayer asks God to protect those who serve.

The Contrast: Cutting VA healthcare, stripping 400,000 VA employees of bargaining rights, and driving "doctors, nurses, mental health professionals, and claims processors out of the agency" abandons those who served.[25]

Song 32: "O Freedom!" — African American Spiritual/Freedom Song

Tradition: African American Spiritual
Key Lyric: "O freedom, O freedom, O freedom over me! And before I'd be a slave, I'd be buried in my grave"

A powerful spiritual that became a civil rights anthem, expressing willingness to sacrifice everything for liberty.[48][28]

The Contrast: Veterans who fought for freedom now face a VA system under assault — with clinics closing, benefits being slashed, and homeless veterans' programs cut.[47]

Part VIII: Equality, Dignity, and Human Rights

Project 2025 mandates the federal government to officially adopt the stance that marriage is only between a man and woman, discriminates against transgender people, and dismantles services for LGBTQ+ Americans. It undermines racial equality by defunding services for underserved communities.[4]

Song 33: "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love" — Peter Scholtes (1966)

Tradition: Catholic/Christian
Key Lyric: "We will work with each other, we will work side by side, and we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride"[49]

Written by a Catholic priest inspired by John 13:35 ("By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"), this hymn's call to guard dignity and work side by side is a direct challenge to policies of division.[49]

The Contrast: Mandating discrimination against LGBTQ+ Americans, undermining racial equality, and defunding services for underserved communities are the opposite of guarding "each one's dignity."[4]

Song 34: "A Change Is Gonna Come" — Sam Cooke (1964)

Tradition: Gospel/Soul/Civil Rights
Key Lyric: "It's been a long time coming, but I know a change is gonna come"

Inspired after Cooke and his family were turned away from a whites-only Holiday Inn, this song "highlights Cooke's personal experience with racism and segregation." It has been covered by Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, Beyoncé, and Lizzo as "a song of hope for the future".[45]

The Contrast: By "selectively erasing nonwhite perspectives and histories," Project 2025 "risks producing generations

unprepared for the demands of higher education and ill-suited to contribute meaningfully to America's economy".[2]

Song 35: "For Gay and for Straight, a Place at the Table" — Shirley Erena Murray

Tradition: Christian (ecumenical)
Key Lyric: "For gay and for straight, a place at the table, a covenant shared, a welcoming space, a rainbow of race and gender and colour"[10]

This additional verse of "For Everyone Born" was written by Murray to explicitly include LGBTQ+ persons in God's welcome.[10]

The Contrast: Project 2025 dismantles services for LGBTQ+ Americans, mandates federal anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination, and bans gender-affirming care.[50][4]

Song 36: Sikh Teaching — "Recognize the Entire Human Race as One"

Tradition: Sikh
Key Teaching: "Recognize the entire human race as one" — Guru Gobind Singh Ji. "Truth is high, but higher still is truthful living" — Guru Nanak Dev Ji[51]

Guru Nanak proclaimed the equality of all people, including women, at a time when they were "treated like property". The Sikh principle of *langar* (community kitchen) ensures everyone eats the same food, seated at the same level, as a practice of radical equality.[52]

The Contrast: Policies that disproportionately harm women, communities of color, immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, and the poor violate the Sikh teaching that all of humanity is one family.

Song 37: "Bahá'í Prayer for the Unity of Mankind" — 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Tradition: Bahá'í
Key Lyric: "Gather all people beneath the shadow of Thy bounty and cause them to unite in harmony... May they be refreshed by the same breeze"[53]

This prayer asks: "The sun of Thy mercy is shining upon all, and the clouds of Thy bounty shower upon all. Thy gifts encompass all".[53]

The Contrast: An agenda that "prioritizes control over fairness, enforcement over welfare, and exclusion over inclusion" is the antithesis of gathering all people in unity and harmony.[2]

Song 38: "I'm Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table" — Freedom Song

Tradition: African American Spiritual/Civil Rights
Key Lyric: "I'm gonna sit at the welcome table one of these days"

A song of the civil rights movement expressing the determination to claim a seat at the table of equality and justice.[30][48]

The Contrast: Project 2025 represents "a substantial threat not only to individual rights but also to the very foundation of American democracy" — pulling chairs away from the welcome table.[2]

Part IX: Truth, Justice, and the Rule of Law

Project 2025 seeks to centralize power in the executive branch, reclassify civil service employees as political appointees, undermine checks and balances, and politicize agencies from the FDA to the EPA.[2][4]

Song 39: "If You Miss Me at the Back of the Bus" — Freedom Song

Tradition: Civil Rights
Key Lyric: "If you miss me at the back of the bus, and you can't find me nowhere, come on up to the front of the bus, I'll be riding up there"

A classic "zipper song" of the civil rights movement that asserts the right to full participation in public life.[48]

The Contrast: Replacing civil servants with political appointees, firing 75% of federal employees over four years, and dismantling checks and balances is a power grab that removes citizens from participation in their own governance.[50]

Song 40: "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize" — Civil Rights Hymn

Tradition: African American Gospel/Civil Rights
Key Lyric: "Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on"

Adapted from an old gospel song, this became one of the most important civil rights anthems, encouraging perseverance in the face of injustice.[28][48]

The Contrast: When agencies responsible for food safety, medicine, travel, and consumer protection are politicized,

keeping eyes on the prize of justice becomes more important than ever.[4]

Song 41: "Rise Up" — Rabbi (Jewish, 2009)

Tradition: Jewish (Reform)
Key Lyric: A celebration of the teachings of Prophet Amos, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Theodor Herzl[54]

Written as "the musical centerpiece" of MLK Shabbat services bringing Historic Ebenezer Baptist Church and a Reform congregation together, this song bridges faiths in the pursuit of justice. Congressman John Lewis appeared in its music video.[54]

The Contrast: The Prophet Amos thundered: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Project 2025's concentration of executive power is the damming of that stream.

Song 42: "Od Yavo Shalom Aleinu" — Israeli Folk Song

Tradition: Jewish/Israeli
Key Lyric: A message of "peace across peoples and for the entire world"[46]

This beloved Israeli folk song, popular at camp and NFTY events, carries a message of universal peace with "meaning and significance for youth and adults alike".[46]

The Contrast: An administration that has withdrawn from international climate agreements, abandoned diplomatic norms, and pursued divisive policies at home undermines the peace this song envisions.

Part X: Women's Rights and Reproductive Freedom

Project 2025 proposes erasing the word "abortion" from federal laws, using the 1873 Comstock Act to ban mailing abortion medication, restricting contraception, and stripping away reproductive healthcare for active service members.[50]

Song 43: "Canticle of Mary (Magnificat)" — Traditional

Tradition: Christian (universal)
Key Lyric: "He has shown the strength of his arm; he has scattered the proud... He has brought down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted the humble and meek. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away"[55]

Mary's song from Luke 1:46-55 is one of the most radical texts in scripture — celebrating God's reversal of unjust power structures, feeding the hungry, and lifting the lowly.

The Contrast: Stripping reproductive healthcare from millions of women, banning abortion medication by mail, and "further pushing them away from serving in the military" diminishes the dignity that Mary's song exalts.[50]

Song 44: "Ella's Song (We Who Believe in Freedom Cannot Rest)" — Bernice Johnson Reagon

Tradition: African American/Civil Rights
Key Lyric: "We who believe in freedom cannot rest"[48]

Based on the words of civil rights leader Ella Baker, this song insists that the struggle for freedom — including women's freedom — never ends.

The Contrast: Using an archaic 1873 law to restrict women's healthcare in the 21st century is precisely the kind of regression that demands believers in freedom cannot rest.[50]

Part XI: The Call to Courage and Perseverance

Song 45: "Let There Be Peace on Earth" — Jill Jackson & Sy Miller (1955)

Tradition: Interfaith/Christian
Key Lyric: "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me... With God as our Father, we are family. Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony"[56]

Written for an international youth retreat bringing 180 students from different faiths, political, and social backgrounds together, this song "became a prayer that we hope someday becomes a reality". It has been recorded by artists from Mahalia Jackson to Vince Gill and is found in hymnals around the world.[56]

The Contrast: When government policy divides families, demonizes immigrants, and pits communities against each other, the prayer that "peace begins with me" becomes an act of radical resistance.

Song 46: "Dona Nobis Pacem" — Traditional (Interfaith)

Tradition: Christian/Jewish/Islamic (interfaith)
Key Lyric: Latin: "Dona nobis pacem" (Grant us peace); Hebrew: "Sim shalom tova uvracha" (Grant peace, goodness and blessing); Arabic: "Asalaam aleikum" (Peace be upon you)[57]

This ancient round, dating to approximately the 7th century, has been adapted for interfaith worship with texts in Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic. It represents the shared longing for peace across the Abrahamic faiths.[57]

The Contrast: An agenda that pits religious communities against each other, weaponizes faith for political purposes, and abandons the common ground of peace violates the shared prayer of three great traditions.

Song 47: "Siyahamba / We Are Marching in the Light of God" — South African

Tradition: Christian (anti-apartheid)
Key Lyric: "We are marching in the light of God"

The final hymn in the Presbyterian hymnal *Glory to God*, this song from the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa represents the triumph of justice over oppression.[30]

The Contrast: The march toward justice requires rejecting Project 2025's agenda of concentrated power, stripped rights, and abandoned vulnerable communities.[2]

Song 48: "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around" — Freedom Song

Tradition: African American Spiritual/Civil Rights
Key Lyric: "Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around, turn me around, turn me around"

A zipper song that lets protestors name specific obstacles—"Ain't gonna let injustice turn me around"—this anthem of determination fueled the civil rights movement.[28][48]

The Contrast: When confronted with mass deportations, healthcare cuts, education gutting, environmental destruction, and the centralization of power, this song's message is clear: don't turn around.

Song 49: "People Get Ready" — Curtis Mayfield (1965)

Tradition: Gospel/Soul
Key Lyric: "People get ready, there's a train a-comin'... All you need is faith to hear the diesels hummin'"

Curtis Mayfield's gospel-infused anthem calls people to prepare for the coming of justice, using the metaphor of a freedom train.[48][28]

The Contrast: While Project 2025 tries to derail the train of democratic governance and social justice, Mayfield's song insists the train is coming regardless — "you don't need no ticket, you just thank the Lord."

Song 50: "Imagine" — John Lennon (1971)

Tradition: Secular/Humanist/Universal
Key Lyric: "Imagine all the people living life in peace... Imagine no possessions... A brotherhood of man"

While not a religious hymn, Lennon's "Imagine" expresses the universal moral vision shared by all the faiths in this book: a world without greed, hunger, or division — where people share the world in peace.

The Contrast: Project 2025's vision is the opposite of imagination — it is a blueprint for fear, division, and the concentration of wealth and power. Every faith tradition represented in this book imagines something better.

Afterword: The Moral Arc

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in his final sermon, recited the words of "We Shall Overcome" and declared: "I believe it because somehow the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice".[44]

The 50 songs in this book span 3,000 years of human moral expression — from ancient Buddhist chants to medieval Irish hymns, from the Quran's commands to care for orphans to African American spirituals born in slavery, from Jewish prayers for peace to Bahá'í songs of unity, from Sikh teachings on equality to the social gospel hymns of 20th-century Christianity.

Every one of these songs says the same thing in a different language: **Care for the stranger. Feed the hungry. Heal the sick. Protect the children. Honor creation. Lift up the fallen. Seek justice. Make peace.**

The Trump administration, Project 2025, and the MAGA movement stand in direct moral opposition to these universal teachings. This is not a partisan claim — it is a factual

comparison of specific policies against the explicit moral teachings of the world's major religious and ethical traditions.

The songs endure. The policies will pass. As the hymn says: "We shall overcome."

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A Note from the Author

This book was born from a simple conviction: the 2,400 residents of Riderwood Village — and the hundreds of thousands of Americans living in continuing care retirement communities across this nation — represent one of the most powerful untapped forces for good in the history of American civic life.

CivicGood is a free online discussion group where neighbors come together to talk about the values that shape how we live with one another — exploring the beliefs, stories, and moral commitments that make us who we are. It lives at **https://groups.io/g/CivicGood**, and it is open to anyone on earth. But it was built for people like you.

This book is an invitation — enthusiastic, unapologetic, and deeply patriotic — to join the conversation. Not because the world is falling apart (though some days it feels that way), but because you have something the world desperately needs: your voice, your experience, your conscience, and your courage.

Pull up a chair. The best years of your civic life may be just beginning.

What is your favorite Hymn?

AMERICAN IDEALS

Americans grow up singing songs that define who we aspire to be: a nation of freedom, justice, equality, and democratic self-governance. These songs are sung at baseball games, in school auditoriums, at Fourth of July celebrations, and at memorial services for fallen soldiers. They represent the soul of the American promise.

But what happens when the government acts directly against those ideals? **Songs of Freedom**